

Site M:26/11/2

Old Post Office

Washington Street and Montgomery Avenue

Built: 1938

Public Access

This limestone and brick building has a unique two-story hexagonal corner entry tower. It was built in 1938 under the auspices of the Depression-era Works Projects Administration, using W.P.A. architects and craftsmen. Although mail service began at "Montgomery Courthouse" in 1794, it was Rockville's first permanent post office building. It is adorned with terazzo floors, bronze grillwork and a 1940 Judson Wood mural picturing the rolling country side near Sugar Loaf Mountain. It has had only minor alteration and is still in use as one of Rockville's branch post offices.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. *M: 26/11/2*

Magi No. 1651113801

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Old Post Office

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Washington and Montgomery Avenue not for publicationcity, town Rockville vicinity of congressional district 8state Maryland county Montgomery

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u> </u> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u> </u> private	<u> </u> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> government
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military
			<u> </u> museum
			<u> </u> park
			<u> </u> private residence
			<u> </u> religious
			<u> </u> scientific
			<u> </u> transportation
			<u> </u> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name United States Governmentstreet & number telephone no.: 424-2600city, town Washington state and zip code D.C.

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Land Records liber 723street & number Montgomery County Courthouse folio 163city, town Rockville state Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title M-NCPPC - 1976date federal state ☒ county ☒ local pository for survey records City of Rockvillecity, town Rockville state Maryland 20850

7. Description

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Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This 1938 English Georgian style Post Office sits on the corner of Washington and Montgomery Streets. It is five bays along South Washington Street by six bays deep, one story high with corner tower, of brick and limestone material, with full basement.

The most distinguishing architectural feature is a two story hexagonal entrance tower. The tower makes a strong image both visually and functionally. Visually, the tower marks the intersection of these important streets. Functionally, one gains entrance to the Post Office through the tower.

The two-tiered tower, with its arched openings and arched windows, and the two major wings are faced with limestone. The clay tiled roof tower is pitched and capped by a small carved stone finial. The two identical wings radiate from the tower at 90°, parallel to either street and end with an apsidal niche. Each wing is divided by limestone pilasters, and a limestone entablature unifies the entire facade hiding the flat roof. In addition to the niche, each wing has three large rectangular 12-over-12 double hung windows.

The wing along Washington Street forms the public Postal lobby, while the wing along Montgomery Avenue is comprised of administrative offices. The remaining interior block of the building supports the Post Office functions, giving an overall square footprint. Loading docks are located at the rear of the building.

The spacious postal lobby has 15-foot ceilings, the original bulletin boards and brass and glass postal boxes, and a handsome painted mural depicting a view across Montgomery County to Sugarloaf Mountain on the end wall. A mezzanine overlooks the lobby as well as the main work area. The remaining interior has been divided into smaller offices. The building now houses the post office ("Courthouse Station") and recruiting offices for the U. S. military.

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Superv. Arch: Louis A. Simon

Specific dates 1938-9

Builder/Architect

Architect; R. Stanley-Brown

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Superv. Engineer: Neal A. Melick

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Old Post Office is significant for its architecture, unique in Rockville, and as a symbol of the maturation of Rockville as a mercantile center -- the City's first permanent post office.

Federal service began at "Montgomery Courthouse" in 1794, with Thomas Perry Willson as postmaster. The road from Fredericktown (Frederick) to Georgetown was a "post road", and stages were used to haul the mail. Rockville's post office was located in a variety of buildings for the next 144 years. Space was leased from different store owners until the need was recognized for a permanent post office building; Rockville's growth during "building boom" of 1890 to 1905 and again during the New Deal era had increased its residential and business population.

On this site from the mid-19th century through 1938 stood the frame buildings which housed the Montgomery County Sentinel, its presses, newspaper office with wood stove, and the Matthew and Rebecca Fields family which issued the weekly publication for so many years. The old Sentinel buildings were razed in November 1938 and construction was begun on the Post Office during that month.

The Post Office was a Works Progress Administration project, designed by Supervising Architect Louis A. Simon and Architect R. Stanley-Brown. Its appearance was at that time and now unique for Montgomery County, as contrasted with other, more classically styled post offices being constructed in Silver Spring and Bethesda during the same period. The cost of the Post Office was approximately \$77,000, \$35,000 of which was for the lot itself. The project was dedicated on July 22, 1939 with a parade, and the building officially opened for business on September 5 of that year.

A local newspaper covering the dedication noted the building's plywood paneling with marble base and wainscotting, terrazzo floors, and bronze grills on the windows. One particularly interesting feature, standard equipment in all new post offices for the use of the inspectors, was the "Lookout Gallery", a room above the sorting room which commanded a view of every section of the building without the supervisor being seen.

In the Fall of 1940, the Treasury Department's Fine Arts Section presented a mural of Sugarloaf Mountain, with rolling Montgomery County countryside in the foreground, to the Post Office. There was somewhat of a protest over the mural, as Sugarloaf Mountain is not

(continued)

Statement of Significance - Old Post Office, Rockville MD
(continued)

located in Montgomery County. The mural was painted by Judson Smith of New York.

Although Postal officials have considered closing this operation since the North Washington Street main office opened in 1965, a fiercely protective clientele maintains its post office boxes and does its business there. Midmorning scenes of lawyers, businessmen, retirees, secretaries and courthouse officials conversing in the lobby are much the same as they were 45 years ago.

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10. Geographical Data

Quadrangle scale _____

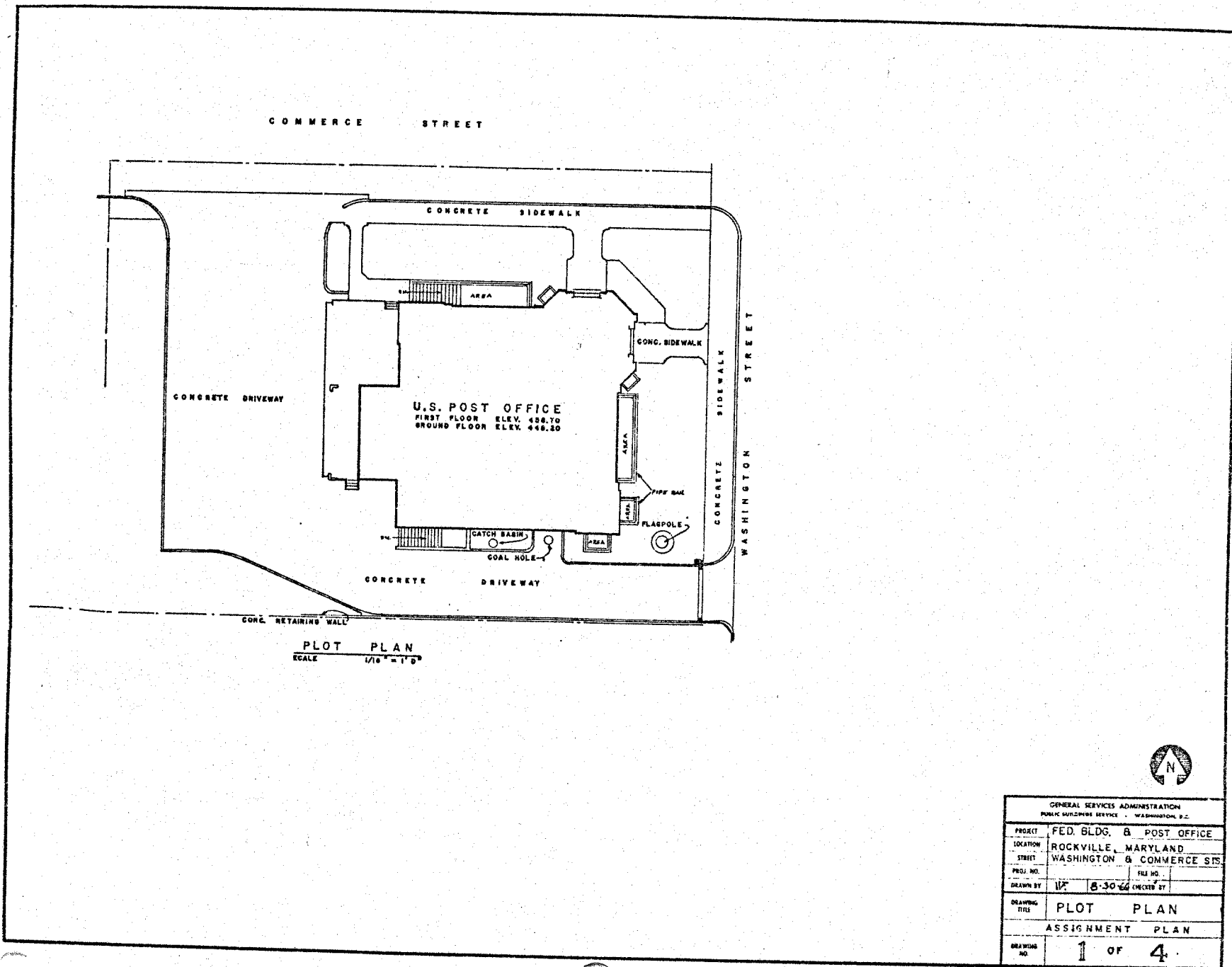
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11. Form Prepared By

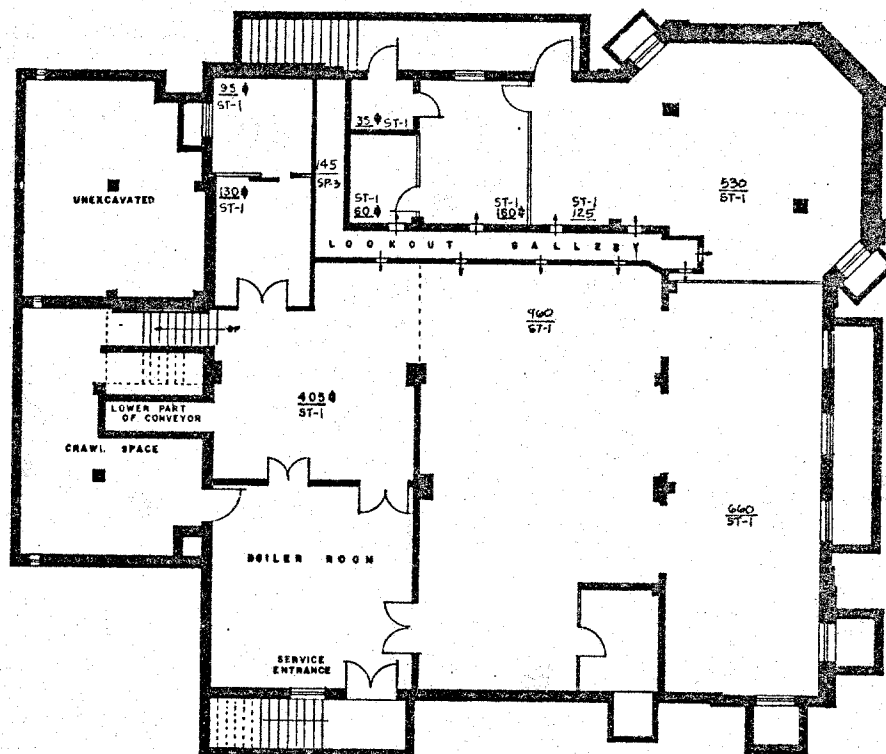
state Maryland 20850

PS-2746

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Old Post Office



GROUND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

OCCUPIABLE AREA = 3,305 SQ. FT.

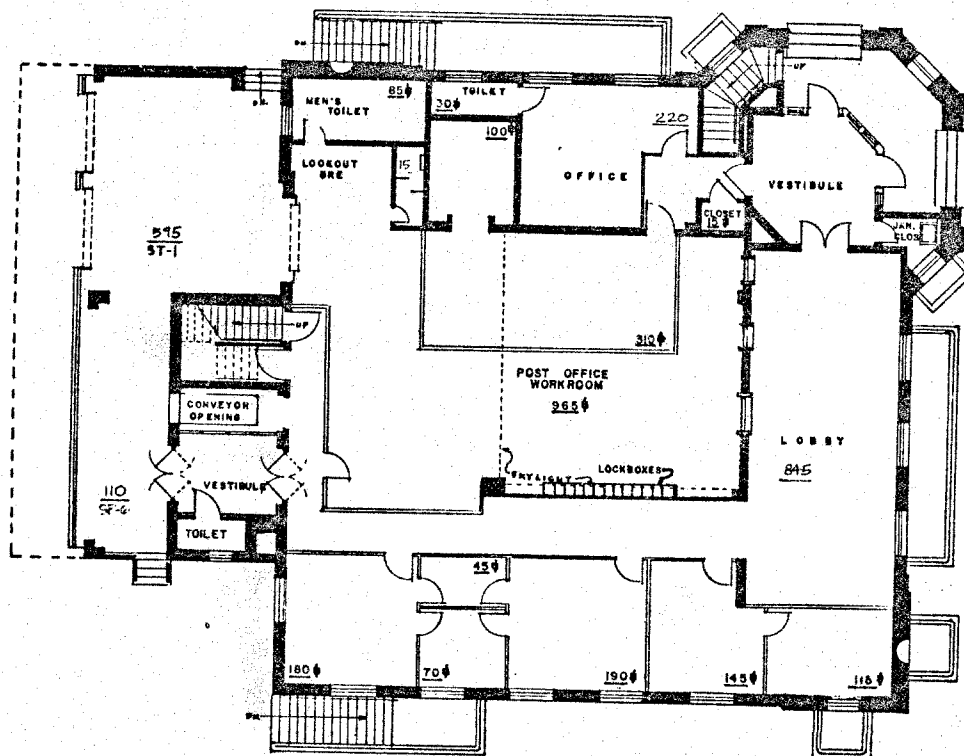
OCCUPIABLE AREAS

GROUND FLOOR	3,305
FIRST FLOOR	3,048
SECOND FLOOR	435
MEZZANINE (NOT ASSIGNABLE AREA)	340
BUILDING TOTAL	7,328
INSIDE GROSS OF BUILDING	3,782



OCCUPIABLE AREA		3,305	GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION	
BUILDING SUPPORT AREA		1,457	PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE - WASHINGTON, D.C.	
Mechanical	-	275	PROJECT	FEDERAL BLD. & POST OFFICE
Toilets	-		LOCATION	ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
Customary	632		STREET	WASHINGTON & COMMERCE STS.
Circulation	275		PROJ. NO.	FILE NO.
Horizontal	-	275	DRAWN BY	5-20-66
Vertical	275		CHECKED BY	
Construction	552	4,724	DRAWING TITLE	GROUND FLOOR PLAN
GROSS AREA			ASSIGNMENT PLAN	
			DRAWING NO.	2 OF 4

M: 26/11/2
Old Post Office



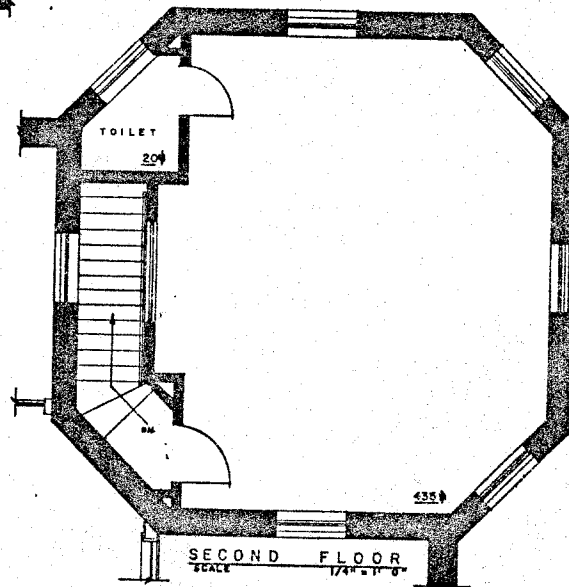
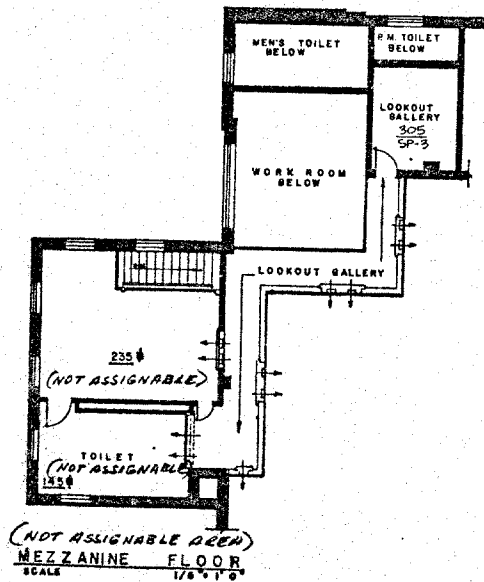
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"
OCCUPIABLE AREA = 3,045 SQ. FT.

OCCUPIABLE AREAS

FIRST FLOOR 3,045

OCCUPIABLE AREA		3,045	GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION	
BUILDING SUPPORT AREA		2,391	PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE - WASHINGTON, D.C.	
MECHANICAL	10		PROJECT	FEDERAL BLD. & POST OFFICE
TOILETS	141		LOCATION	ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
CUSTODIAL	955		STREET	WASHINGTON & COMMERCE STS.
CIRCULATION	614		PROJ. NO.	FILE NO.
HORIZONTAL	365		DRAWN BY	6-30-66 CHECKED BY
VERTICAL	249		DRAWING TITLE	FIRST FLOOR PLAN
CONSTRUCTION	665		ASSIGNMENT PLAN	
GROSS AREA	5436		DRAWING NO.	3 OF 4





OCCUPIABLE AREAS

SECOND FLOOR	435
MEZZANINE	540
TOTAL	975

OCCUPIABLE AREA = 975 SQ. FT.



OCCUPIABLE AREA		975	GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION PUBLIC BUILDINGS SERVICE - WASHINGTON, D.C.	
BUILDING SUPPORT AREA	573		PROJECT	FEDERAL BLDG. & POST OFFICE
MECHANICAL	4		LOCATION	ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
TOKENS			STREET	WASHINGTON & COMMERCE STS.
CUSTODIAL	242		PROJ. NO.	FILE NO.
CIRCULATION	165		DRAWN BY	W.F. 8-30-66 CHECKED BY
HORIZONTAL	201		DRAWING TITLE	SECOND FL. & MEZZANINE
VERTICAL	-0-		ASSIGNMENT PLAN	
CONSTRUCTION	142		DRAWING NO.	4 OF 4
GROSS AREA		1640		

Town Scenes

PEERLESS ROCKVILLE

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Old Post Office
From Peerless Rockville
calendar, 1981



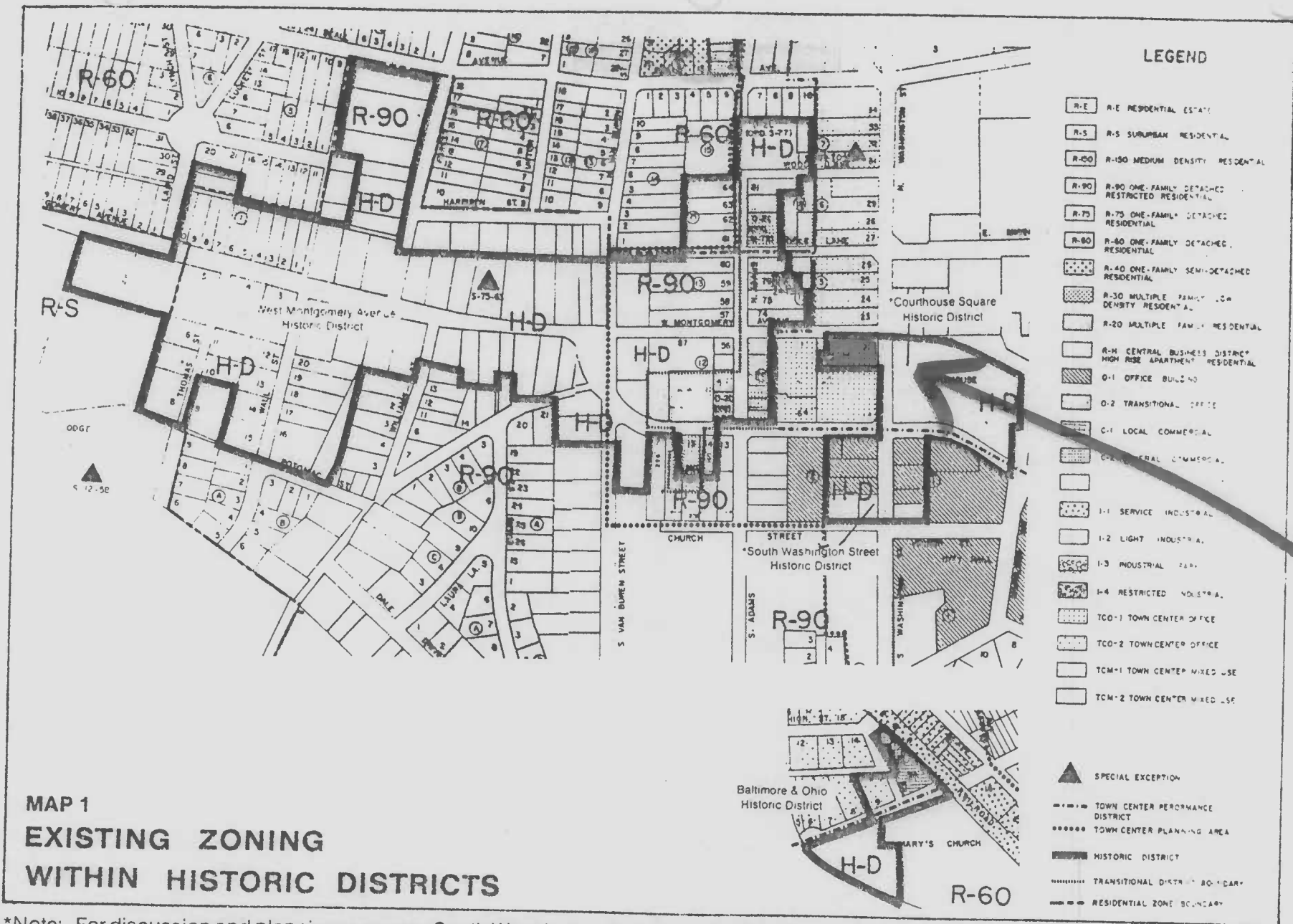
The Old Post Office

1981 Engagement Calendar

13 Months/\$4.00 Donation

**MAP 1
EXISTING ZONING
WITHIN HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

*Note: For discussion and planning purposes South Washington Street and the Courthouse Square district are considered independent Historic Districts even though they are shown on the existing zoning map as one district.





RICHARD H. ANDREWS
1608 Farragut Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20851

1009-5

M: 26/11/2

Old Post Office

NORTH ELEVATION
MONTGOMERY AVENUE

AUGUST, 1984



RICHARD H. ANDREWS
1608 Farragut Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20851

M: 26/11/2

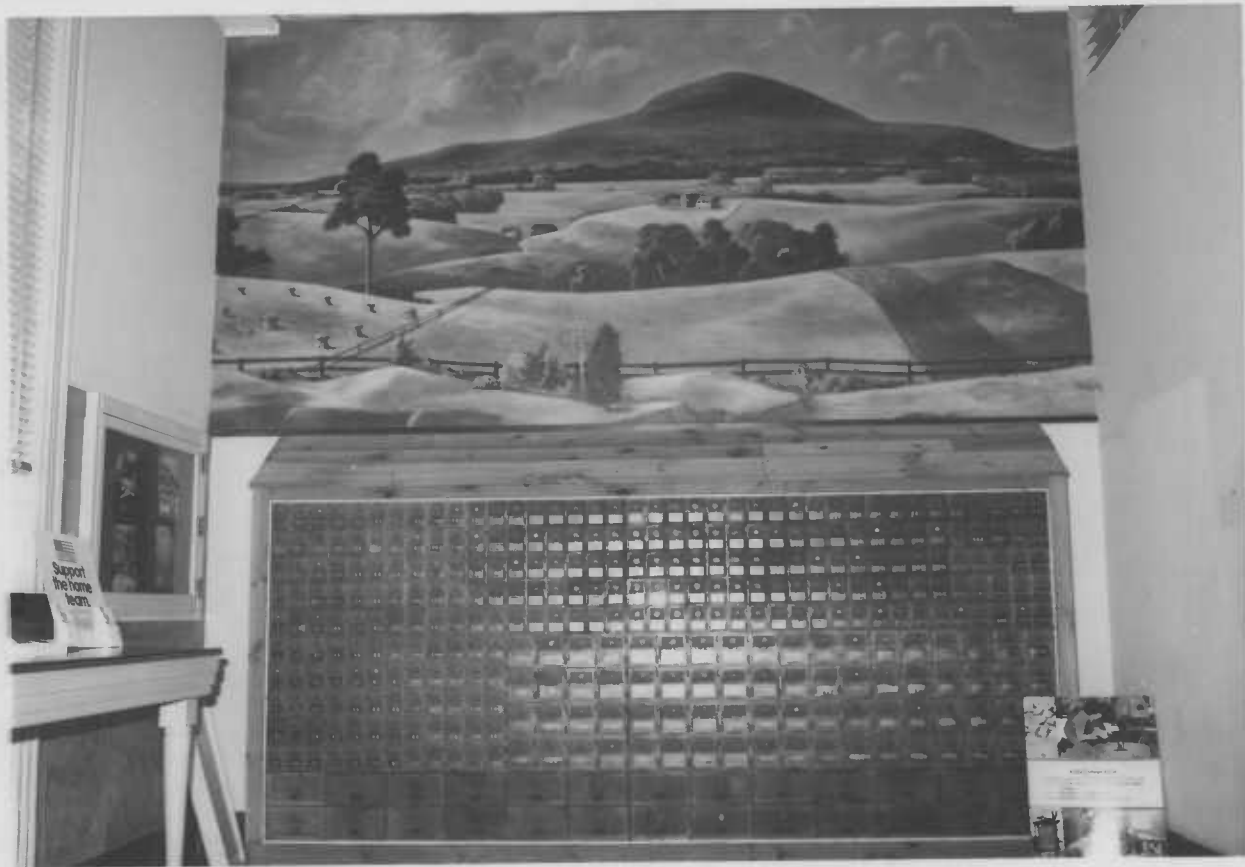
Old Post Office

East ~~NORTH~~ ELEVATION - WASHINGTON ST

AUGUST, 1984

1007-2

1007-2



RICHARD H. ANDREWS
1608 Farragut Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20851

M: 26111/2

Old Post Office
(interior)

SOUTH WALL

AUGUST, 1984

1009-3